



# Members' Code of Conduct

<b>Approval date: 20/04/2026</b>	<b>Approved by: Board</b>
<b>Applies to: Board Members</b>	<b>Linked Documents:</b> Anti Bribery Policy   Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy   Whistleblowing Policy.
<b>Frequency of review: 3 years</b>	<b>Next review date: April 2029</b>

## Foreword

This Code of Conduct has been adopted by the North Kent Marshes Water Level Management Board ("the Board") and is based on the Cabinet Office's Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies (June 2011). It sets out the standards expected of all Board Members and will be reviewed annually or as required to reflect changes in legislation or best practice.

This Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with the *ADA Good Governance for Internal Drainage Boards* guidance, which outlines the principles and practices expected of Board Members in carrying out their duties responsibly, ethically, and in the public interest.

## **Part 1 – General Standards of Conduct**

### **1. Application**

This Code applies to all elected, appointed, or co-opted Members of the Board when acting in their official capacity. Members must uphold the principles in this Code whenever they:

- Conduct Board business.
- Represent the Board or give the impression of acting on its behalf.

### **2. Principles of Public Life**

Members must act in line with the seven Nolan Principles:

- Selflessness.
- Integrity.
- Objectivity.
- Accountability.
- Openness.
- Honesty.
- Leadership.

### **3. General Conduct**

Members must:

- Treat others with courtesy and respect.
- Not discriminate, harass, bully, or intimidate others.
- Not compromise the impartiality of staff or contractors.



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- Not use their position to secure personal advantage.
- Safeguard confidential information.
- Support the Board's collective decisions once made.
- Use Board resources only for Board-related duties and not for personal or political purposes.
- Avoid bringing the Board into disrepute.
- Disclose confidential information unless you have authorisation, a legal duty to disclose, or are seeking professional advice under conditions of confidentiality.
- Disclose information in any other case unless it is reasonable, in the public interest, made in good faith, and in line with Board procedures.
- Not prevent someone from accessing information they are legally entitled to.
- Members may engage in political activity but must not compromise their duties to the Board.

### **Part 2 – Governance and Financial Responsibilities**

#### **4. Stewardship of Public Funds**

Members must:

- Ensure the proper use of public funds and assets.
- Avoid waste or extravagance.
- Act with due care, value for money, and in the public interest.

#### **5. Remuneration and Expenses**

Members must:

- Comply with all rules on remuneration, expenses, and allowances.
- Ensure they meet HMRC requirements.

#### **6. Gifts and Hospitality**

Members must:

- Not accept gifts or hospitality that could compromise judgment.
- Never canvass or seek gifts or hospitality.
- Refer all offers to the Clerk.
- Ensure all accepted gifts/hospitality are recorded in the Board's Register.
- Ensure anything accepted can withstand public scrutiny.



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## **Part 3 – Duties and Responsibilities**

### **7. Role of Members**

- Members must play a full and active role in the work of the Board. They should carry out their duties responsibly, act in good faith, and always act in the best interests of the Board.
- Members must deal with the public and stakeholders fairly, efficiently, and respectfully. They must not act in a way that unjustifiably favours or discriminates against individuals, interests, or organisations.
- Members must comply with all statutory obligations and any administrative requirements associated with their appointment.
- Members must respect the principle of collective decision-making and corporate responsibility. Once the Board has reached a decision, all Members should support that decision publicly, even if they disagreed during debate.
- Members must not use, or attempt to use, their role to promote personal interests, or the interests of family members, businesses, or organisations with which they are connected.
- Members serve the Board as a whole, not the organisation or authority that appointed them. Their duty is to the collective interest of the Board, not to any individual body, group, or constituency.
- Members are expected to exercise independent judgment and act in accordance with principles of public service and fiduciary responsibility — similar to the duties expected of company directors.
- If a majority of the Board, acting with due cause, believes a Member has seriously breached this Code, the Member is expected to reflect seriously on their position and consider resignation.

## **Part 4 – Conflicts of Interest**

### **8. Personal Interests**

Members must:

- Avoid any conflict between public duties and personal interests.
- Declare both financial and non-financial interests.
- Not participate in decisions where there is a risk or perception of bias.

Examples of declarable interests include:

- Membership of public, charitable, or political bodies.
- Employment or directorships.
- Gifts or hospitality over £25.
- Land or contracts within the Board's area.



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You have a personal interest in any matter before the Board if it affects:

- Any organisation in which you or a close associate have a role (e.g. a trustee, director, or committee member), including charities, public bodies, or political groups.
- Any business or employment in which you or a family member is involved.
- Any person or body who employs or pays you or has paid expenses on your behalf.
- Any company in which you or a close associate owns shares worth over £25,000 or 1% of its total share value.
- Any land, property, or contractual relationship you hold within the Board's area, including tenancy or licences lasting 28 days or more.
- Any individual or organisation from whom you have received a gift or hospitality worth £25 or more.

You also have a personal interest if a decision could reasonably be seen to benefit or disadvantage:

- You,
- A member of your family, or
- Someone with whom you have a close personal association, more than it would affect other local ratepayers or landowners.

### 9. Disclosure

If you have a personal interest in any matter being discussed at a Board or committee meeting, and you are present, you must declare the interest as soon as the item is raised — or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

You do not need to declare an interest again if:

- It has already been properly declared and recorded in the Register of Interests, and
- It relates to gifts or hospitality received over three years ago.

If the interest involves sensitive information that has been withheld from the public register, you must still state that you have a personal interest, but you do not have to give details.

You are only expected to declare interests that you know about or reasonably should be aware of.

### 10. Prejudicial Interests

A personal interest becomes a *prejudicial interest* if a reasonable member of the public, knowing all the relevant facts, would think that your interest is so significant it could affect your ability to put the public interest first.



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However, your interest is not prejudicial if:

- The matter does not affect your financial position, or that of someone connected to you.
- It does not involve a decision about a licence, approval, contract, or registration that affects you or a close associate.
- It relates only to general Board matters such as:
  - Members' allowances or indemnities,
  - Ceremonial honours, or
  - Setting the drainage rate or special levy.

### 11. Participation When Interests Are Declared

Members must declare where they have an interest in a matter to be discussed, and the Chair will then decide what if any part the member may participate in the discussion or voting on that item.

### Part 5 – Register of Interests

### 12. Registration

You must register your personal interests by notifying the Board Clerk in writing within 28 days of:

- This Code being adopted by the Board, or
- Your appointment to the Board (whichever is later).

You must also update your entry within 28 days of becoming aware of:

- A new personal interest, or
- A change to any previously registered interest.

Personal interests are those set out in **Section 8** of this Code.

### 13. Sensitive Interests

If disclosing an interest would create a serious risk of harm or intimidation:

- The Clerk may agree to withhold it from the public register.
- Members must notify the Clerk if circumstances change.

Such decisions will be made in line with the Board's data protection obligations.



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## Version Control

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date Approved</b>	<b>Summary of Changes</b>
1.0	20/04/2026	Initial policy approved